Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-2.   (Canceled)

3.   (Currently Amended) An image reader, comprising:

a color image pickup unit including groups of image pickup elements provided for a plurality of colors, each image pickup element group including a plurality of image pickup elements linearly arranged in rows on a substrate, wherein a row of image pickup elements in the image pickup element group and another row of image pickup elements in the same image pickup element group are arranged such that respective image pickup elements match in position in a direction in which the image pickup elements are arranged;

a light source illuminating an original;

a plurality of mirrors reflecting light which has originated from the light source and has been reflected from or passed through the surface of the original;

a light-gathering lens gathering the light reflected from the mirrors onto the color image pickup unit;

an analog-to-digital conversion section subjecting to analog-to-digital conversion pixel data output from the color image pickup unit;

a pixel data storage device storing pixel data which have been subjected to analog-to-digital conversion by the analog-to-digital conversion section; and

an averaging device that subjects to an averaging operation a plurality of pixel data sets which are stored in the pixel data storage device, the plurality of pixel data sets representing pixel data of the same image portion having been read at different times from the same position with reference to a direction in which image pickup elements of the respective

image pickup element rows are arranged, and outputs a result of averaging operation as one set of pixel data.

4.   (Currently Amended) An image reader, comprising:

a color image pickup unit including groups of image pickup elements provided for a plurality of colors, each image pickup element group including a plurality of image pickup elements linearly arranged in rows on a substrate, wherein a row of image pickup elements in the image pickup element group and another row of image pickup elements in the same image pickup element group are arranged such that respective image pickup elements match in position in a direction in which the image pickup elements are arranged;

a light source illuminating an original;

a plurality of mirrors reflecting light which has originated from the light source and has been reflected from or passed through the surface of the original;

a light-gathering lens gathering the light reflected from the mirrors onto the color image pickup unit;

an analog-to-digital conversion section subjecting to analog-to-digital conversion pixel data output from the color image pickup unit;

a pixel data storage device storing pixel data which have been subjected to analog-to-digital conversion by the analog-to-digital conversion section; and

an addition device that subjects to an adding operation a plurality of pixel data sets which are stored in the pixel data storage device, the plurality of pixel data sets representing pixel data of the same image portion having been read at different times from the same position with reference to a direction in which image pickup elements of the respective image pickup element rows are arranged, and outputs a result of adding operation as one set of pixel data.

5. (Currently Amended) An image reading method for use with an image reader, comprising:

reading pixel data with a color image pickup unit that includes groups of image pickup elements provided for a plurality of colors, each image pickup element group including a plurality of image pickup elements linearly arranged in rows on a substrate, wherein a row of image pickup elements in the image pickup element group and another row of image pickup elements in the same image pickup element group are arranged such that respective image pickup elements match in position in a direction in which the image pickup elements are arranged;

subjecting to analog-to-digital conversion pixel data output from the color image pickup unit;

storing pixel data which has been subjected to analog-to-digital conversion;

averaging a plurality of stored pixel data sets, the plurality of stored pixel data sets representing pixel data <u>of the same image portion</u> having been read at different times from the same position with reference to a direction in which image pickup elements of the respective image pickup element rows are arranged; and

outputting a result of the averaging as one set of pixel data.

6. (Currently Amended) An image reading method for use with an image reader, comprising:

reading pixel data with a color image pickup unit that includes groups of image pickup elements provided for a plurality of colors, each of image pickup element group including a plurality of image pickup elements linearly arranged in rows on a substrate, wherein a row of image pickup elements in the image pickup element group and another row of image pickup elements in the same image pickup element group are arranged such that

respective image pickup elements match in position in a direction in which the image pickup elements are arranged;

subjecting to analog-to-digital conversion pixel data output from the color image pickup unit;

storing pixel data which has been subjected to analog-to-digital conversion;

adding a plurality of stored pixel data sets, the stored pixel data sets representing pixel data <u>of the same image portion</u> having been read at different times from the same position with reference to a direction in which image pickup elements of the respective image pickup element rows are arranged; and

outputting a result of the adding as one set of pixel data.